

THE CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 5 1. A magnetic jewelry-forming component for preparing a jewelry article, comprising a body member configured and dimensioned in an ornamental shape and having a first magnetizable portion for attractive or repulsive magnetic association with at least one other magnetic jewelry-forming component and at least one further element for magnetically coupling to the at least one other magnetic jewelry-forming component, 10 wherein the body member has a magnetic strength that can be overcome by a person's hand strength such that the body member and at least one other magnetic jewelry-forming component can be placed in different positions relative to each other, and wherein the further element comprises (a) a second magnetized portion that has a polarity that is different from that of the at least one other magnetic jewelry-forming component so that it is 15 magnetically attracted thereto or (b) a retaining structure that prevents complete separation of the body member from the at least one other magnetic jewelry-forming component when the first magnetized portion of the body member has a polarity that is the same as that of the at least one other magnetic jewelry-forming component so that it is magnetically repulsed therefrom.
- 20 2. The jewelry-forming component of claim 1, wherein the ornamental shape includes a curved or arcuate surface, an annular configuration or a ring.
3. The jewelry-forming component of claim 1, wherein the body member has at least one female element associated therewith for magnetically attracting and receiving a male element of the at least one other magnetic jewelry-forming component, with the first 25 magnetized portion providing a minimum magnetic strength that is sufficient to retain the male element within the female element and a maximum magnetic strength that can be overcome by a person's hand strength to separate the male and female elements, such that a plurality of such components can be magnetically coupled to form an article of jewelry.
4. The jewelry-forming component of claim 3 wherein the body member has an 30 arcuate shape and the female element is located at an end of the arcuate shape, and wherein the female element defines a cavity having a depth sufficient to receive a male element of the other jewelry-forming component at different positional relationships therein.
5. The jewelry-forming component of claim 4 wherein the further element is a male element that extends away from the female element and is located on the opposite end

of the arcuate shape, with the male element having a forward end that is magnetically attracted to the first magnetizable portion of the body member of the at least one other magnetic jewelry-forming component.

6. The jewelry-forming component of claim 4 wherein the body member is at least partially tubular and the first magnetized portion of the body member is provided by a magnetized pellet or disk member.

7. The jewelry-forming component of claim 4 wherein the body member is tubular and the further element is another female element located on an opposite end of the tubular body member.

8. The jewelry-forming component of claim 4 wherein each female element defines a cavity having a depth sufficient to receive a male element at different positional relationships therein, and each female element is magnetized to attract oppositely polarized male elements.

9. The jewelry-forming component of claim 8, wherein the first magnetized portion of the body member is provided by a magnetized pellet or disk member.

10. A jewelry article in the form of a ring, bracelet, anklet, chain, choker, necklace, or watchband comprising between two and two hundred jewelry-forming components according to claim 1.

11. A jewelry article in the form of a ring, bracelet, anklet, chain, choker, necklace, or watchband comprising a plurality of jewelry-forming components of claim 6 and a plurality of arcuate components having first and second male ends which are configured and dimensioned to be received and magnetically retained in the female elements of adjacent jewelry-forming components.

12. The jewelry-forming component of claim 11, wherein the body member has outer and inner surfaces, the at least one other jewelry-forming component comprises at least one dimensioning member that is operatively associated with the body member with the first magnetizable portion of the body member and the dimensioning member having the same magnetic polarity so that they repulse each other with a maximum magnetic strength that can be overcome by a person's hand strength, such that the magnetic repulsion between the body and dimensioning members enables the component to attain a first configuration wherein the dimensioning member is positioned remotely from the body member and a second configuration wherein the person's hand strength urges the dimensioning members towards the body member, so that the jewelry component can be adjusted to conform to the person.

13. The jewelry-forming component of claim 12 wherein the inner surface of the body member defines a cavity having a depth sufficient to receive the a plurality of dimensioning members that fit inside the cavity when urged therein by a person's hand strength.

5 14. The jewelry-forming component of claim 13 wherein the dimensioning member is associated with the body member cavity with a mechanical connection that prevents complete separation of the at least one dimensioning member from the body member in the first configuration.

10 15. The jewelry-forming component of claim 14 wherein the cavity includes a narrowed or partially blocked opening and the mechanical connection comprises an extension provided on the dimensioning member that fits through the narrowed opening and includes an end portion having a size or shape that is larger than the opening so that the at least one dimensioning member cannot be completely separated from the body member.

15 16. The jewelry-forming component of claim 13 wherein the body is configured in the shape of a ring and the each dimensioning member has a shape that is complementary to a portion of the ring.

17. The jewelry-forming component of claim 16 wherein the ring is oval or round and includes between two and sixteen dimensioning members.

20 18. The jewelry-forming component of claim 16 wherein the ring includes a ramp positioned adjacent a dimensioning member to minimize gaps between adjacent dimensioning members.

19. A jewelry article in the form of a ring, bracelet, anklet, choker, necklace, earring, or watchband comprising the jewelry-forming component of claim 13 so that the article is self-sizing to the wearer.

25 20. The jewelry-forming component of claim 1, wherein the further element comprises a plurality of additional magnetized locations so that the jewelry-forming component can be magnetically joined to another jewelry-forming component in one or multiple relative positions, and wherein the magnetic field emitted or radiated by the plurality of magnetized locations is effective at a distance that is less than that which would
30 be present if the entire component is magnetized, so that the jewelry component does not have a deleterious effect on magnetic-sensitive items that are handled by a person wearing the jewelry component.

21. The jewelry-forming component of claim 20, wherein the plurality of magnetized locations are symmetrically distributed on the body member and each have about the same size and shape.

22. The jewelry-forming component of claim 19, which further includes an adornment of a precious stone, a material having a different color from that of the body member, indicia, or a part of a character, pattern or design.

23. The jewelry-forming component of claim 20, wherein the magnetic field emitted or radiated by the plurality of magnetized locations is configured in an indicia or other ornamental pattern that is invisible until revealed by magnetic particles or films.

24. An article of jewelry comprising at least two jewelry-forming components according to claim 20 wherein the components are magnetically attracted to each other and can be magnetically joined to form a portion or all of the article.

25. The article of claim 24, wherein the plurality of magnetized locations are arranged so that the components are uniquely engageable to form the article.

26. The article of claim 24, wherein each of the at least two components include between 4 and 100 magnetized locations and are magnetically aligned in more than two relative positions.

27. A jewelry article comprising a continuous loop formed by magnetic coupling of first and second oppositely magnetized jewelry-forming components according to claim 1.

28. The jewelry article of claim 27 wherein the first and second magnetized members are at least partially arcuate in shape.

29. The jewelry article of claim 27 wherein the first and second members have an inner face, and are magnetically coupled in face to face relation.

30. The jewelry article of claim 27 wherein the first and second magnetized members have a C or U shape and are magnetically coupled so that open areas are not adjacent so that other articles can be releasably secured to the loop.

31. The jewelry article of claim 30 wherein the loop has a circular, elliptical or oval shape, and optionally with straight or linear portions.

32. The jewelry article of claim 31 wherein the first and second magnetized members each have outer and inner surfaces, and one or both of the members has one or more adornments on the outer or inner surface or both surfaces.

33. The jewelry article of claim 31 wherein each outer surface includes a flat portion so that the members can also be magnetically coupled by contact of the flat portions.

34. The jewelry article of claim 33 wherein at least one of the members has adornments on the inner surface that are hidden when the members are magnetically coupled by contact of the inner surfaces, but which adornments are visible when the members are magnetically coupled by contact of the outer surfaces.

5 35. The jewelry article of claim 27 in the form of a ring, bracelet, necklace or chain link.

36. A jewelry article comprising an interlocked chain which comprises a plurality of continuous loops according to claim 27, wherein the loops are interlocked to form the chain.

10 37. The jewelry article of claim 36 further comprising one or more charms or adornments securely but releasably attached to one or more of the loops and optionally including a clasp for opening or closing the chain for placement on the wearer.

38. The jewelry article of claim 10, wherein at least two jewelry forming components join to form a clasp, with the movement of the components from one position to another position signifying the secure closing of the clasp.

15 39. The jewelry article of claim 1, wherein at least two jewelry forming components are provided with magnetized portions that facilitate retention of the components in spaced related in a first position, so that at least one component can be moved with respect to the other by a user and, when the user releases the moved component, it automatically returns to the first position.

20 40. The jewelry article of claim 39, wherein the jewelry forming components are arranged on an axis so that one can be moved rotationally with respect to the other.